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Fifty-fifth session

Agenda item 32

United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations

United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations

Report of the Secretary-General*

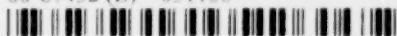
I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 53/22 of 4 November 1998, decided to proclaim the year 2001 as the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and invited Governments, the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and other relevant international and non-governmental organizations, to plan and implement appropriate cultural, educational and social programmes to promote the concept of dialogue among civilizations, including through organizing conferences and seminars and disseminating information and scholarly material on the subject, and to inform me of their planned activities. In that resolution, the Assembly also requested that I present a provisional report on activities in this regard to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (see A/54/546) and a final report to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session. The present report is written pursuant to paragraph 6 of Assembly resolution 54/113 of 10 December 1999. The activities described in my report A/54/546 have been pursued by my Personal Representative for the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, Giandomenico Picco, and by UNESCO.

2. That the General Assembly's call for a dialogue among civilizations seems to have been well received across the world, in both the public and the private sectors led to the launch of a number of initiatives aimed at celebrating, and diffusing the fear of, diversity, and underscoring the importance of inclusion.

3. Over the last 12 months, governmental and academic institutions and non-governmental organizations have conducted seminars, debates and research work on the issue of the dialogue among civilizations, bringing together a variety of civil society groups. The topic of dialogue among civilizations was also the subject of a meeting, at the head-of-State level, that took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 5 September 2000. The meeting was strongly supported by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohammad Khatami, and chaired by the Director-General of UNESCO. The Secretary-General, 12 heads of State (of Afghanistan, Algeria, Georgia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Latvia, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Qatar and the Sudan), the Secretary of State of the United States of America and the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Egypt, India and Iraq were among those in attendance (see annex I).

* The footnote requested by the General Assembly in resolution 54/248 was not included in the submission.



II. The conceptual underpinnings

4. As mentioned in the 1999 report, diversity is the concept underlying a focused reflection about dialogue among civilizations. Learning how to address diversity has become a more compelling necessity as our world has grown smaller and our interaction more intense and, indeed, unavoidable. It is the perception of diversity as a threat that is at the very origin of war. It is the perception of diversity as a threat that blinds so many, who equate it with enmity. It is the perception of diversity as a threat that has made so many overlook the common humanity that unites us all. Can a reflection on these issues help in the rediscovery of the foundations of the United Nations? Can it be directed towards enriching the vision that emanates from the United Nations? Can it become concrete and practical?

5. I am very grateful that a number of eminent persons (Prince Hassan bin Talal, Richard von Weizacker, Jacques Delors, Dr. A. Kamal Aboulmagd, Dr. Hannan Ashrawi, Dr. Lourdes Arispe, Dr. Ruth Cardoso, Dr. Leslie Gelb, Dr. Nadine Gordimer, Professor Sergey Kapitzka, Dr. Hayao Kaway, Ambassador Tommy Koh, Dr. Hans Kung, Professor Amartya Sen, Professor Tu Wei-Ming and Professor Javad Zarifi) have kindly accepted the invitation to cooperate with my Personal Representative in pursuing these reflections during the next year. Their work will be contained in a book to be presented to me by late summer 2001. In striving towards those objectives, the conceptual journey may be articulated along the following lines:

The indignities of the 1990s:

- A sober look at ethnic cleansing, killings in the name of God and similar atrocities stemming from the perception of diversity as a threat;

Diversity and the United Nations:

- Diversity as an inherent part of universality, which is an integral feature of the philosophy behind the world organization;
- Diversity and the common denominator of values, as embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and other United Nations documents;

Diversity as the human face of globalization:

- In today's world, interdependence is a two-way street as never before. It is no longer only the case that the major powers affect the smaller ones, but also the reverse. "Our world has never been more integrated, more vulnerable and more unequal";

Dialogue as a seed for a new paradigm of international relations:

- Revisiting the concept of the enemy. Do we need an enemy?;
- Can we aspire to a society in which we leaders lead without an enemy?;
- If, at this stage in human development, society cannot exist without an enemy, can we all aim to rally against the same enemy — intolerance?;
- Rigid alliances may be remnants of the past. Are alignments to be flexible according to issues?;
- Individual responsibility as an indispensable ingredient of a new paradigm;
- Accountability of the individual in international relations.

III. The unsung heroes of dialogue

6. Examples are the best means for conveying a message in a convincing manner. The faces, names and stories of 12 individuals from a spectrum of societies, who have reached across the "divide" to the "other", will be shown in short television spots. The 12 spots — of 30 seconds each — will be offered to all television stations in the world for broadcasting as many times as possible during the year 2001. The same spots will also be placed on the web site for the dialogue, which is being established by the United Nations Secretariat. It will be an interactive site through which it is expected that direct and instant communication may be established.

IV. From theory to practice

7. If, indeed, it is possible to define a new paradigm of international relations engendered by the dialogue, then it should be possible to transform the theory into

practice. In the spirit of the dialogue, it has already been possible to achieve small steps in the communication between two Member States that had, thus far, been at odds with each other. On the occasion of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, arrangements were made by the Secretary-General to engender in the future real dialogue; in this case, at least listening to each other — on the part of the leaders of these two countries — had been possible. Thus, it should also be possible to put forth a proposal that focuses on a specific area of the world and suggests a specific diplomatic initiative by the Secretary-General. This would be a fitting conclusion to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

8. A United Nations Trust Fund for the dialogue among civilizations was established late in 1999. Switzerland has contributed in cash, while others have offered to defray some of the costs incurred by the meetings of the Eminent Persons Group. Academic institutions and non-governmental organizations have also offered support and assistance. Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy and International Relations is providing the secretariat for the work of the Eminent Persons Group. As the contributions have been limited, support for some of the activities has also come from the private sector. No funds from the regular budget have been allocated to activities related to the dialogue among civilizations.

Annex**Attendance at the Round Table on Dialogue among Civilizations organized at United Nations Headquarters on 5 September 2000****Heads of State**

Afghanistan	Mr. Burhanuddin Rabanni
Algeria	Mr. Abdelaziz Bouteflika
Georgia	Mr. Edouard A. Shevardnadze
Indonesia	Mr. Abdurrahman Wahid
Islamic Republic of Iran	Mr. Mohammad Khatami
Latvia	Ms. Varna Vike-Freiborg
Mali	Mr. Alpha Omar Konar
Mozambique	Mr. Joachim Alberto Chissano
Namibia	Mr. Sam Nujoma
Nigeria	Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo
Qatar	Sheikh Hamad bin Kahlifa
Sudan	Mr. Omer Hassan El Bashir

Foreign ministers

Azerbaijan	Mr. Vilayat Guliyev
Costa Rica	Mr. Roberto Rojas Lopez
Egypt	Mr. Amre Moussa
India	Mr. Jaswant Singh
Iraq	Mr. Tarik Aziz
United States of America	Ms. Madeleine K. Albright

Intellectuals

China	Mr. Ru Xin
France	Mr. Edgar Morin
Islamic Republic of Iran	Mr. Mohammed Javad Faridzadeh
Jamaica	Mr. Rex Nettleford
Japan	Mr. Masanori Aoyagi
Lithuania	Ms. Ugné Karvelis
Netherlands	Mr. Hans van Ginkel
Nigeria	Mr. Wole Soyinka
Pakistan	Ms. Attiya Inayatullah
Peru	Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Republic of Korea	Mr. Byong-Ik Koh
Russian Federation	Mr. Alexandre Yakovlev
United States of America	Mr. Richard Bulliet
United States of America	Ms. Jane Cortez Edwards
United States of America	Mr. R. K. Ramazani
United States of America	Ms. Flora Lewis

**General Assembly**

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6 November 2000

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Fifty-fifth session

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Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Paragraph 7

For the existing text, *substitute*

7. If, indeed, it is possible to define a new paradigm of international relations engendered by the dialogue, then it should be possible to transform the theory into practice. In the spirit of the dialogue, it has already been possible to achieve small steps in the communication among some Member States that had, thus far, been at odds with each other. On the occasion of the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, the Secretary-General has worked hard in this direction. Thus, it should also be possible to put forward a proposal that focuses on a specific area of the world and suggests a specific diplomatic initiative by the Secretary-General. This would be a fitting conclusion to the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.





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sectors, led to the launch of a number of initiatives aimed at celebrating, and defusing the fear of, diversity, and underlining the importance of inclusion.

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Annex I

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Latvia	Ms. Varna Vike-Freiborg
Mali	Mr. Alpha Omar Konar
Mozambique	Mr. Joachim Alberto Chissano
Namibia	Mr. Sam Nujoma
Nigeria	Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo
Qatar	Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa
Sudan	Mr. Omer Hassan El Bashir

Foreign ministers

Azerbaijan	Mr. Vilayat Guliyev
Costa Rica	Mr. Roberto Rojas Lopez
Egypt	Mr. Amre Moussa
India	Mr. Jaswant Singh
Iraq	Mr. Tarik Aziz
United States of America	Ms. Madeleine K. Albright

Intellectuals

China	Mr. Ru Xin
France	Mr. Edgar Morin
Islamic Republic of Iran	Mr. Mohammed Javad Faridzadeh
Jamaica	Mr. Rex Nettleford
Japan	Mr. Masanori Aoyagi
Lithuania	Ms. Ugnė Karvelis
Netherlands	Mr. Hans van Ginkel
Nigeria	Mr. Wole Soyinka
Pakistan	Ms. Attiya Inayatullah
Peru	Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Republic of Korea	Mr. Byong-Ik Koh
Russian Federation	Mr. Alexandre Yakovlev
United States of America	Mr. Richard Bulliet
United States of America	Ms. Jane Cortez Edwards
United States of America	Mr. R. K. Ramazani
United States of America	Ms. Flora Lewis

Annex II

Reports reviewed in response to resolution 54/113

A note verbale was sent by the Secretariat of the United Nations to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations referring to General Assembly resolution 54/113 of 10 December 1999 on the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations, and also to the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/54/546) which was submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session in accordance with resolution 53/22. In resolution 54/113 the Secretary-General was asked to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session a further substantive report on preparations for the Year, and Member States were asked to submit information regarding any activities undertaken in preparation for the Year.

So far, the following Permanent Missions have submitted reports: Belarus, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Norway, Russian Federation. The Observer Mission of Switzerland has submitted a report. Reports have also been received from Secretariat departments and other entities of the United Nations system, as follows: Office of Legal Affairs, Department for Disarmament Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Department of Public Information, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Universal Postal Union, International Telecommunication Union. A report has also been received from the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The reports are available for consultation in the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.



General Assembly

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Agenda item 117

Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001

Construction of additional conference facilities at Bangkok and Addis Ababa

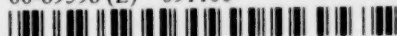
Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/236, annual progress reports have been submitted to the General Assembly on the construction of conference facilities at Addis Ababa. The present report provides information on the completion of the project, which was closed and capitalized in the books of the Organization on 30 June 2000. No further progress reports on this project will be submitted.

Upon completion of the construction project, a fund balance in the amount of \$7,702,600 remains under the construction-in-progress account. The Secretary-General recommends retention of those funds, pending consideration of all related matters.

* The present report is being submitted after the deadline due to the need to include data on the status of the construction-in-progress account, in order to make proposals on disposal of the balance of funds under that account.



I. Introduction

1. By resolution 39/236 of 18 December 1984, the General Assembly approved the construction of additional conference facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) at Addis Ababa.
2. In accordance with resolution 39/236, annual progress reports have been submitted on the construction project. The present report focuses on the progress made since the last report, submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session (A/54/431).

II. Status of the project at Addis Ababa

A. Status of construction

3. Construction of the new conference facilities at the Economic Commission for Africa began on 29 April 1991. Substantial completion of the construction was achieved on 21 April 1996. The inauguration ceremony was held on 30 April 1998. The new facilities are currently in use by ECA.
4. In his report of 4 October 1999, the Secretary-General informed the General Assembly on final residual activities relating to installation of the telecommunications system at ECA (A/54/431). As part of the agreement reached with the contractor in 1998 on that remaining issue, the contractor was to ship some minor equipment related to the uninterrupted power supply system. An amount of US\$ 52,266.08 had been retained, to be released upon receipt of the equipment by ECA. After delivery of the remaining equipment in 2000, the certificate of completion for the installation of the telecommunications system was issued to the contractor on 6 June 2000 and the amount retained from the final payment was released. All other pending payments to the contractor relating to the telecommunications system were finalized and processed. On 30 June 2000, the project was closed and capitalized in the books of the Organization.

B. Financial aspects of the project

5. An amount of \$115,228,494 had been authorized by the General Assembly for construction of conference facilities. As at 30 June 2000, when the project was closed and capitalized, total final disbursements amounted to \$114,937,567. The uncommitted balance of funds, in the amount of \$290,927, remains on the construction-in-progress account, as a part of the total balance reported under that account on 30 June 2000 (see annex I).

III. Status of the construction-in-progress account

6. No current activities remain under the construction-in-progress account. The attached unaudited financial statement (annex II) reflects the financial position of the account after capitalizing the construction costs, the last activity under the account. It may be noted that the balance of funds amounts to \$7,703,000, following

completion of the construction projects at Nairobi, Bangkok and Addis Ababa (\$2,880,000) and accumulated bank interest (\$4,822,600).

7. Possible alternatives for utilization of the balance are under review. In this connection, the Secretary-General wishes to inform the General Assembly of the compelling need for further upgrading the facilities of the United Nations Office in Nairobi and of ECA.

8. By several resolutions, the most recent of which are resolutions 54/248 and 54/249, the General Assembly has recognized the need for more extensive use of the conference facilities at Gigiri, Nairobi, for United Nations activities. Those facilities, while sufficient to accommodate the activities of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and of the Commission on Human Settlements and their subsidiary bodies, are not adequate for holding large United Nations conferences and conventions. In addition, accommodation at Gigiri for United Nations agencies located in Nairobi is insufficient. The central administration in consultation with the Office in Nairobi is currently reviewing possible options to address those inadequacies.

9. Proposals are currently under consideration from ECA for construction of additional office facilities at the United Nations complex at Addis Ababa to accommodate the offices of certain United Nations agencies still located in Addis Ababa outside the United Nations compound (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), to be relocated to the compound for security reasons.

10. The Secretary-General intends to submit proposals in respect of United Nations facilities at Nairobi and Addis Ababa to the General Assembly at a later stage, in accordance with the procedure established by the General Assembly in resolution 37/237. Accordingly, it is recommended that the balance of \$7,702,600 be retained in the construction-in-progress account until such time as the General Assembly is able to consider the above proposals.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

11. With completion of the construction project at Addis Ababa, the present report on the project should be considered the final report.

12. The General Assembly may wish to take note of the fact that the construction of the conference facilities at Addis Ababa has been completed and the relating construction costs in the amount of \$114,937,567 have been capitalized in the books of the Organization.

13. The General Assembly may wish to take note of the balance of funds in the amount of \$7,702,600 that remains under the construction-in-progress account as of 30 June 2000 and decide to retain those funds in that account until it considers all related matters.

Annex I

**Construction of United Nations conference facilities at
Addis Ababa: status of appropriations, expenditures
and unutilized funds, as at 30 June 2000**

(United States dollars)

Funds authorized by the General Assembly (1984-1997)	115 228 494 ^a
Disbursements	
Construction contract	94 153 712
Consultants and construction supervision	16 319 105
Contract for the telecommunications system	3 342 841
Administrative expenses	996 271
Loss on exchange rate	125 638
Subtotal	114 937 567
Unutilized funds	290 927
Outstanding obligations as at 30 June 2000	-
Estimated balance of the funds	290 927

^a Breakdown of the funds authorized by the General Assembly:

United States dollars

1984-1989	3 120 000
1990-1991	29 800 100
1992-1993	57 414 900
1994-1995	17 241 900
1996-1997	<u>7 651 594</u>
	<u>115 228 494</u>

Annex II

United Nations construction-in-progress account: statement of assets, liabilities, reserves and fund balances, as at 30 June 2000 (unaudited)

(Thousands of United States dollars)

Assets	
Cash and term deposits	9 553
Other accounts receivable	78
Construction-in-progress	-
Total assets	9 631
Liabilities	
Due to United Nations General Fund	1 928
Due to UNEP	-
Total liabilities	1 928
Reserves and fund balances	
Cumulative surplus ^a	7 703
Capital funds relating to land and buildings	-
Total reserves and fund balances	7 703
Total liabilities, reserves and fund balances	9 631

^a Composed of:

ESCAP project unexpended funds	2 039.7
UNEP project unexpended funds	549.4
ECA project unexpended funds	290.9
Interest income unused	4 822.6